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[Review of] A-Z Lyrics Universe

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Internet Resource

A-Z Lyrics Universe.<http://www.azlyrics.com/>

[Visited Aug'06] Lyrics sites have a troubled history, raising copyright violation challenges that have shut down several, including the *The International Lyrics Server* (CH, Apr'98, 35-4238; as *Songfile*, CH, Sup'00, 37Sup-180). Nonetheless, scores of them reside on the Web, most presenting a plethora of sophomoric ads and sometimes spyware. *A-Z Lyrics Universe* (A-Z) abounds in annoying ads, but has survived since 2000, boasting a speedy search engine for 50,000 uncensored popular song lyrics (by 1,500 artists, including country, rap, and alternative performers), accessible by artists' names and song and album titles. Its lyrics sources are often unclear. The site includes user submissions, so lyrics may come from CD booklets, transcriptions, or other Web sites. Coverage varies by artist: Air's entry includes only one album, Ani DiFranco's is comprehensive. Artist selection appears random, yet includes many established but also less-known artists (e.g., Tanita Tikaram and Editors). Still, notable acts are absent, including Crowded House, Four Tops, George Harrison, Robin Hitchcock, Mercury Rev, Paul Simon (though Simon and Garfunkel are included), Richard Thompson, and Warren Zevon.

Recent additions are listed below the home page ads and featured albums (which link to a new service, user-supplied reviews). Direct content links to other established lyrics sites are convenient but sometimes load slowly. One such site, *OldieLyrics.com*, includes lyrics in its search corpus, which A-Z does not. *OldieLyrics.com* is a misnomer; e.g., it includes all of Paul Simon's solo work, including 2006's *Surprise*. Many lyric searchers have come to rely on Google to search across lyrics sites, since no one site is comprehensive, and many do not include lyrics text-searching. Until publishers work together to establish a viable commercial database, those libraries that wish to gather existing sites for users might include A-Z. The site works well with most browsers except Safari.

Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates, general audience.

--R. A. Aken, *University of Kentucky*

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Choice April 1998 35:35-4238; doi:10.5860/CHOICE.35-4238

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